Developed by the Davenport Community School District
Out Of School Time Committee
A Stakeholder Group of the Davenport Network for
Community and School Partnerships

Davenport Community Schools, Network for Community and School Partnerships (NCSP) is a group of organizations that facilitate and support the partnerships within Davenport that contribute to a healthy, thriving school system.

The group focuses on:
- building the capacity of the schools and organizations within Davenport to meet needs that help students reach their full potential; and
- acting as engaged ambassadors for the public education system.

The NCSP group typically meets monthly. Stakeholder committees of NCSP that focus on specific projects meet as needed.

For more information visit:
www.davenportcommunityschools.org

Davenport Community Schools..............................................................563-336-5000
Davenport Parks and Recreation..............................................................563-328-7275
Davenport Public Library........................................................................563-326-7832
Friendly House..........................................................................................563-323-1821
Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, Scott County..................563-359-7577
Lydia Home..............................................................................................563-322-0382
Project Renewal.......................................................................................563-324-0800
Scott County Family YMCA.....................................................................563-323-4668
Davenport Stepping Stones.....................................................................563-528-0973
United Neighbors Inc...............................................................................563-322-7363

A Community Guide To School-Age Care

Developed by the Davenport Out Of School Time Committee
A Stakeholder Group of the Davenport Network for Community and School Partnerships
There are a variety of ways to find school age care in your community. Consider consulting the following for ideas and recommendations.

- Ask your child’s school.
- Contact your local Parks and Recreation Department, YMCA or neighborhood agency.
- Find out what your child’s friends participate in after school.
- Consult the child/youth librarian at your public library.
- Contact the Community Child Care Resource and Referral in your area.
- Pay attention to information at social service agencies and health clinics.
- **For more information visit:** http://www.davenportschools.org/departments-and-services/before-school-after-school-and-summer-programs/

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### Evaluating After School Child Care Programs

The following checklist will help you measure the quality of the program you are considering. Take it along when you visit, and check each item.

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<th>Yes</th>
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<td>Are the indoor and outdoor areas safe?</td>
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<td>Are the children supervised by sight at all times?</td>
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<td>Are bathrooms available?</td>
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<td>Are there written health, safety and emergency rules?</td>
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<td>Are there enough adults for the number of children in the program?</td>
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<td>Does the staff talk to children often and in a friendly, helpful way?</td>
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<td>Does the staff listen to children, answering their questions and requests?</td>
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<td>Does the staff encourage children to be independent and solve problems?</td>
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<td>Are children of both sexes given equal opportunity to try the same activities?</td>
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<td>Does it appear that the staff does not use physical or other punishment that hurts, frightens, or humiliates children?</td>
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<td>Are children relaxed and happy while they play?</td>
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<td>Are there fun and exciting activities to choose from each day with adequate materials?</td>
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<td>Is there an area set aside for quiet activities?</td>
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<td>Is there evidence that parents receive reports on their children? Are questions and comments from parents encouraged?</td>
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<td>Are there opportunities for parents to visit and participate?</td>
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### Why Are School Age Care Programs Important for Children?

Sometimes called “afterschool” or “out of school time,” research shows that quality, school age care programs contribute to the overall health and well-being of school age youth.

- An analysis of 68 afterschool studies concluded that high quality afterschool programs can lead to improved attendance, behavior and achievement. Students participating in a high quality afterschool program went to school more, behaved better, received better grades and did better on tests compared to non-participating students.
- Parents miss an average of five days of work per year due to a lack of afterschool care. Decreased worker productivity related to parental concerns about afterschool care costs businesses up to $300 billion per year.
- Teachers and principals report that students become more cooperative, learn to better handle conflicts, develop an interest in recreational reading, and receive better grades due to participation in quality afterschool programs.
- The juvenile crime rate triples between the hours of 3:00 P.M. and 6:00 P.M., and young people are most likely to be victims of a violent crime committed by a non-family member during these same hours.
- Young people who spend one to four hours per week in extracurricular activities are 49% less likely to use drugs and 37% less likely to become teen parents than students who do not participate in extracurricular activities.
Types Of School Age Care Programs

Center/Group Setting
There are different types of programs available within center/group settings. They include:

1) **Licensed Programs.** When a program is licensed, this means it is regulated by the child care licensing body in that state. In Iowa, this is the Department of Human Services. These programs are usually offered by non-profit organizations, sometimes in the same facility as early childhood programs. Often, they provide services such as snacks and transportation. Some programs have scholarships for families who need assistance in paying for care, and/or accept payment through government programs such as Child Care Assistance.

2) **Unlicensed Programs.** When a program is unlicensed, this means that it is not regulated by the child care licensing body in that state. These programs are typically more informal and have less structured activities than licensed or exempt programs. Sometimes they offer activities and care on a “drop in” basis.

3) **Exempt Programs.** When a program is exempt, this means that some other organization besides the child care licensing body in that state provides oversight for the safety and quality standards within that program. Programs that are associated with schools usually fall within this exempt category.

Home Setting
Many communities have individuals who provide care after school or during the summer in their home, for both school age children and children who have not yet entered kindergarten.

1) **Registered Homes.** Homes that are registered must certify in writing that they meet the minimum requirements set by the child care oversight body (Department of Human Services.) Responsibility for making sure the requirements are met rests primarily with the individual provider. However, the Department of Human Services does provide “spot checks” of these homes.

2) **Unregistered Homes.** In Iowa, individuals who provide care for five or fewer children can be unregistered. This means that the child care oversight body (Department of Human Services) does not regulate these homes.

What to Consider Before Deciding On a School Age Care Program

- Can the program handle the needs of my child such as special medicine requirements or disabilities?
- Can we afford this program?
- Do we qualify for financial assistance?
- Do we have proper transportation to and from the program?
- Do the programs serve the ages that we need?
- Do the times of the programs fit our schedule?
- Can the program accommodate the care we may need during holidays, snow days, and breaks?
- Is the location of the program convenient?
- Are there extra activities offered for my child to participate in such as:
  - Sports
  - Music
  - Academic tutoring
Questions To Ask a School Age Care Program

- Are nutritional snacks and meals provided?
- What is your discipline policy?
- Can children come before school and on holidays as well as in the afternoon? Is there an extra fee for that?
- Is there a late fee if you must pick up your children after the program is over?
- Can children attend only a few times a week instead of every day—to accommodate parents' schedules, to save on costs, or to allow for partial sibling care?
- What activities are offered? Are extra fees charged for trips, personal tutoring, and lessons?
- What communication does the program have with children’s school, if any? Does it coordinate group and individual learning with the school to be sure that participants benefit as much as possible?

A Word About Family Participation

Parent involvement in school age care programs is just as important as involvement in other aspects of children's lives. Good programs will ask parents what they want and need, and what their children want to learn and like to do, even before the children enroll. It is important to keep in touch with the program staff after your children begin participating, to stay informed about how they are doing, and to find out if you can help your children learn more or get greater enjoyment from the program. Be sure to ask program staff how you can support your child’s fun and learning from his/her school age care program.

Paying for School Age Care

The cost of school age care depends on the area in which you live, the type of care chosen, and the activities provided within that type of care. There are a wide variety of ways in which families pay for school age care.

- **Fees.** Some families pay a daily, weekly or monthly rate for school age care. Some centers and homes only charge for the care used. Other centers and homes charge a flat fee, no matter how much care is provided.
- **Subsidies.** Most states offer some type of assistance to families who meet income guidelines. In Iowa, low-income families who meet employment or education requirements may qualify for Child Care Assistance. This program is administered by the Iowa Department Human Services. Visit [http://www.dhs.iowa.gov/Consumers/Child_care/ccassistance/ccaforconsumers.html](http://www.dhs.iowa.gov/Consumers/Child_care/ccassistance/ccaforconsumers.html)
- **Employer Supported Benefits.** Some employers offer benefits and supports that help employees with child care needs.
- **Scholarships.** Some programs have access to funds that are set aside to help families pay for child care needs when they do not qualify for subsidies, but do meet income guidelines. Local social service agencies, child care resource and referral agencies and/or child care center directors may have knowledge of these funds within specific communities.
- **Free/low-cost programs.** Some programs are intended to be free or low-cost to families who live within specific geographic areas or those who meet federal poverty guidelines. These programs are generally grant funded or sponsored and may be subject to a renewal process year to year.
Components of a Quality School Age Care Program

A high-quality program keeps children safe and happy after school by providing students access to caring adults, a pleasant physical environment, and fun activities.

While there are many aspects of quality care, a few to consider are:

- **A Safe Environment.** The home or center and any outside areas should be large and safe enough for children’s play. Children should be supervised.

- **Qualified Staff.** The staff should have training that helps them work well with school age children in a group setting. This could include training in child development, recreation, education, social work or related areas.

- **Good Adult-Child Interactions.** Staff should be friendly, helpful, patient and energetic. They should give positive guidance and discipline that encourages children to be independent and solve problems.

- **Varied Activities.** Children should have lots of fun activities to choose from. They should be able to play in groups or by themselves. Children need time and space to “let off steam” after school by running, jumping and climbing, and by participating in games and sports activities. They need plenty of equipment and toys, as well as art, craft, and reading materials to keep them interested.

- **Quiet Time.** Children also should be allowed some “quiet time” to unwind, do homework, or have a private conversation with a friend.

- **Parent Involvement.** Parents should get frequent information about how their child is doing. Good programs encourage parents to be involved in some way - for example, by attending a special family night, helping with a field trip, or sending a snack or some material needed for an art project.

- **Open Door Policy.** A good program allows parents to visit at any time, without an appointment or prior notice. It also encourages parents to express questions and concerns.

For more information about the components of a quality school age care program, visit Iowa Afterschool Alliance at http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/

Questions To Ask a School Age Care Program

Choosing the right school age care program for your family is a big decision. Asking the right questions can help you be informed. When contacting a school age care provider, consider asking these questions first:

- Do you have any spaces available?
- Does the program serve the age of my child?
- Do you offer scholarships or accept Child Care Assistance?
- Do we pay for the care we use, or for an entire week/month?
- What is your staff to child ratio?

**Questions for Program Directors**

- What training do you require or offer staff?
- How do you measure the results of your program?
- What is your staff turnover?
- Can children get help with homework?

**Questions for Staff Working Directly With Youth**

- How long have you worked here?
- How do you keep track of youth?
- How have you handled emergencies?
- How do you deal with sick children?
- Can you tell me about a recent fight or argument you dealt with? How often does that happen?